CLAIMS

1) A method of labelling a succession of containers (2), whereby each container (2) is fed along a labelling path (P) through a number of labelling stations (17), each for applying a respective label (7) to a container (2) travelling through the labelling station (17); the method being characterized by assigning a category of containers (2) to each labelling station (17); identifying each container (2) to assign to the container (2) one of a number of possible types before the container (2) is fed along the labelling path (P); and only activating each labelling station (17) to apply the label (7) to the container (2) travelling through the labelling station (17) if the container (2) falls within the category of containers (2) assigned to the labelling station (17).

2) A method as claimed in Claim 1, characterized in that each container (2) is identified by feeding the container (2) through a recognition station (16) located upstream from the labelling stations (17) along the labelling path (P) and having at least one sensor (29) for identifying the container (2).

3) A method as claimed in Claim 2, characterized in that each container (2) is identified on the basis of the shape of the container (2).

4) A method as claimed in Claim 2, characterized in that each container (2) is identified on the basis

of the size of the container (2).

5) A method as claimed in Claim 2, characterized in that each container (2) is identified on the basis of the colour of the container (2).

6) A method as claimed in Claim 1, characterized in that each container (2) is identified by processing information from operating machines (3) located upstream from the labelling path (P).

7) A method as claimed in one of Claims 1 to 6, characterized in that each labelling station (17) adjusts the position in which the respective label (7) is applied to a corresponding container (2) as a function of the type of container (2).

8) A method as claimed in one of Claims 1 to 6, characterized in that each labelling station (17) comprises a respective guide; and a respective labelling device (26), which is moved along the guide to adapt its position as a function of the shape and size of the containers (2) with respect to a conveyor (15) for feeding each container (2) along the labelling path (P).

9) A machine for labelling a succession of containers (2), the machine comprising a conveyor (15) for feeding each container (2) along a labelling path (P); and a number of labelling stations (17), each located along the labelling path (P) and for applying a respective label (7) to a container (2) travelling through the labelling station (17); the machine (5)

being characterized by comprising a recognition device (28) for identifying each container (2) and assigning to the container (2) one of a number of possible types before the container (2) is fed along the labelling path (P); each labelling station (17) comprising respective control means (30) for memorizing a category of containers (2) assigned to the labelling station (17), and which only activate the respective labelling station (17) to apply the label (7) to the container (2) travelling through the labelling station (17) if the container (2) falls within the category of containers (2) assigned to the labelling station (17).

10) A machine as claimed in Claim 9, characterized in that the recognition device (28) comprises a recognition station (16) located upstream from the labelling stations (17) along the labelling path (P) and having at least one sensor (29) for identifying the container (2).

11) A machine as claimed in Claim 10, characterized in that the sensor (29) identifies each container (2) on the basis of the shape of the container (2).

12) A machine as claimed in Claim 10, characterized in that the sensor (29) identifies each container (2) on the basis of the size of the container (2).

13) A machine as claimed in Claim 10, characterized in that the sensor (29) identifies each

container (2) on the basis of the colour of the container (2).

14) A machine as claimed in Claim 9, characterized in that the recognition device (28) identifies each container (2) by processing information from operating machines (3) located upstream from the labelling machine (5).

15) A machine as claimed in one of Claims 9 to 14, characterized in that the conveyor (15) comprises a carousel conveyor (20) with a vertical axis (21).

16) A machine as claimed in one of Claims 9 to 15, characterized in that each labelling station (17) comprises a respective guide; and a respective labelling device (26), which is mounted to move along the guide to adapt its position with respect to the conveyor (15) as a function of the shape and size of the containers (2).